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Faculty Senate Executive Committee Minutes, January 19, 2021

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FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

January 19, 2021

3:30 – 5:00 p.m.

Zoom Meeting

Present: Timothy Taylor (President), Patrick Belmont (Past-President), Boyd Edwards (President-Elect), President Noelle Cockett (Ex-Officio), Provost Frank Galey (Ex-Officio), Michele Hillard (Exec. Sec.), Benjamin George, Maureen Hearn, John Ferguson, Yoon Lee, Soren Brothers, Vicki Allan, Denise Stewardson, Robert Wagner, Jan Thornton, Don Busenbark, Nikki Kendrick (PRPC Chair)

Absent: Nicholas Roberts
Jessica Lucero
Britt Fagerheim
Sami Ahmed, USUSA President

Guests: Paul Barr, EPC Chair
Lisa Berreau, Vice President, Office of Research
Richard Cutler, Interim Vice Provost, School of Graduate Studies
Dave Cowley, Vice President, Business and Finance

Call to Order - Timothy Taylor

[Approval of Minutes](#) – December 14, 2020

Motion to approve minutes made by Don Busenbark. Seconded by Vicki Allan. Minutes approved as distributed.

University Business - Noelle Cockett, President | Frank Galey, Provost

The independent report that came about from the Zoom meeting with football players and the President was released on Friday and it explained what had transpired during the meeting. The president is pleased that we are able to move on as well as the unanimous vote of confidence she received from the USU Board of Trustees and Utah Board of Regents. Students are back in school and that means that USU is offering the return to school COVID tests. These tests are now available at the Eccles Conference Center. All appointments today were scheduled and that means that there were approximately 500 tests taken. The biggest question is how to motivate students to get the testing done. USU is hoping that our numbers are not as high as the state positivity rates. Return to campus testing will continue through next Wednesday or possibly longer depending upon the outcome. Random sampling will begin in a couple of weeks. USU needs to be able to test enough students to see if we have a 1% change in positivity rates. That could be 1,000-2,000 students each week. The drive through testing is still open at the east stadium location. Appointments must be scheduled at this location. The president is urging anyone who feels like they have flu like symptoms to get tested. Still continuing to look at getting faculty vaccinated. Nothing is in place right now but will continue to provide information as it becomes available.

A committee is in place to help with the process of vaccination once Bear River Health notifies USU of allotments. Last week, the provost held workshops with faculty of all academic colleges. These workshops were cohosted with John Louviere. John rolled out some new support measures that can be offered to faculty members. One is a cell phone app that can serve as speakers so that students can be heard when they ask questions or make comments during class. The provost offered hourly help for faculty with hybrid courses. He also asked them to think about what they have learned from their teaching that they will continue once the pandemic is over. Kicked off the Aspire iChange network. This is a cohort of universities that look at underrepresented groups and providing inclusivity

in our pedagogy. Faculty members from across campus are serving on the committee. iChange co-leaders are Claudia Radel, Abby Benninghoff and Michelle Baker. Presented a 15-20-minute information report for the deans and will add this to the next FSEC meeting.

Information

[EPC Monthly Report](#) – January 7, 2021 - Paul Barr

General Education Subcommittee approved six designations. There were also two designations that were removed. USHE asked that higher level classes not have gen ed designations and that is why the two 3XXX course designations were removed. Discussed the General Education Task force and the discussions that are on-going at the USHE level. The CI/CL sequence was discussed with the goal of rubrics be presented for adoption to the committee.

Academic Standards Subcommittee proposed amendment to the Student Code for Excused Absences was presented and accepted. The proposal cleared up definitions of “Allowable Reasons” and “Injury, Illness, Medical Condition/Status”.

Curriculum Subcommittee approved 54 semester course approval requests. Approved four R401 program proposals. Fran Hopkin and Adam Gleed presented a proposal regarding Institutional Certificates of Proficiency. Topics such as program declaration, degree work, tracking, graduation application, transcript designation and diploma awarded was discussed. The committee was asked to solicit feedback from their colleges and this item will be discussed at the next meeting.

Motion to move the EPC Monthly Report to the Faculty Senate Agenda made by Don Busenbark.

Seconded by Benjamin George. Moved to agenda.

PRPC Subcommittee 400 Code Rewrite - Nikki Kendrick

400 code re-write is finally beginning. Over the years as the code has been updated there has been conflicting or confusing information included. No specific document right now but essentially this will be a clean up process, not necessarily changes in the code. Looking at a primary writer who can help get this task accomplished. A new member of the General Counsel office will also be a member of the committee. Anything substantive will be pulled out and changed at another time.

Motion to move the PRPC Subcommittee 400 Code Re-write to the Faculty Senate Agenda made by Don Busenbark. Seconded by John Ferguson. Moved to agenda.

Reports

[Office of Research](#) Annual Report - Lisa Berreau

FY20 highlights: On-campus research awards reached a new high, USU hosted the 14th Utah Conference on undergraduate research, researchers worked to address global pandemic and responded to COVID-19 impacts on research. There were multiple areas of outreach: the Utah Conference on Undergraduate Research, Sunrise Sessions, Research Landscapes and Research week. Commend the faculty on keeping research going during this pandemic. Typically, there is a metrics page that compares USU with other peer institutions. The peer institution information has not been uploaded or released so we are unable to make that comparison.

Motion to move the Office of Research Annual Report to the Faculty Senate Agenda made by Benjamin George. Seconded by Denise Stewardson. Moved to agenda.

[School of Graduate Studies](#) Annual Report - Richard Cutler

There were a number of changes and challenges. Had to change procedure due to COVID-19. There was a nearly complete turnover in staff and leadership along with communication problems with graduate students, faculty and mentors. Made additional tuition waivers available to departments in which students' research was affected by COVID-19. Permitted the use of unofficial transcripts on applications and allowed departments to determine what programs would require the GRE and other standardized tests. Goals moving forward are: continued responses to COVID-19, mental health, CAPS, additional tuition waivers for those whose research has been affected, and continued surveys to assess the wellbeing of graduate students. Establishment of a Graduate Students of Color Association.

Improve communication with graduate students with direct emails, town hall meetings, surveys and workshops and related forms of support. Working with departments to help recruit graduate students.
Motion to move the School of Graduate Studies Annual Report to the Faculty Senate Agenda made by Don Busenbark. Seconded by John Ferguson. Moved to agenda.

[USUSA](#) Annual Report - Sami Ahmed

No report given. Will hold for next month's meeting.

Old Business

[404.3.6](#) Code Changes (second reading) - Nikki Kendrick

A lot of questions regarding the process of when students would be informed and provide feedback regarding the hiring of faculty.

Motion to move the 404.3.6 code changes to the Faculty Senate Agenda made by Boyd Edwards.

Seconded by Yoon Lee. Moved to agenda.

New Business

Limitations on retirement accounts – Dave Cowley

When the university proposes changing a 300-level policy it goes to the Executive Committee for review and once it is vetted and approved it comes to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee and the Staff Employee Association for presentation and input and then back to the Executive Committee. Proposing to do what many universities have done when salaries become high enough that it creates issues for putting tax deferred dollars away. Proposal needs to cover new employees hired after February 1 and also how to grandfather others. The defined contribution plan is the one under discussion and this has nothing to do with the state plan. The 401A plan essentially works similar to a 401K. The 401A limits employees with a certain amount of income that can be used and that is the maximum amount. Due to high salary individuals there is a second 403B plan that can help with these individuals. This has not been a problem for USU until recently. Head coaches are some of the individuals who fall into this category. The U of U has doctors that also fall into this category. This is not something that USU has had to look at until now. The change will affect an extraordinarily small number of employees.

Proposing that any new employee after 02/01 receiving 14.2% contribution will only be made on the amount of salary that is allowed for a 401A plan which is \$290,000. That number does go up a little each year but is the IRS threshold. (Request table from Dave). Grandfathered employees limit is at a fixed amount of \$550,000.

Promotion and Tenure Survey – Boyd Edwards

Received over 400 responses for the promotion and tenure survey. Send out a reminder the beginning of next week to remind faculty to complete the survey.

Adjourn: 4:41 pm